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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending
9 June 1948

Vol. III No. 22

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GENERAL

Arabs and Jews getting set for truce: Fighting may be expected to continue in Palestine up to the time that the Security Council's cease-fire resolution becomes effective on 11 June. Both sides will try to improve their positions as much as possible before the deadline in view of the fact that all fighting fronts and lines will remain stabilized during the four-week period of the truce. In the past week, Arab troops have attempted to hold their recent gains, and Jewish forces have assumed the offensive, directing their main effort toward piercing the Arab triangular stronghold in central Palestine, where they have attacked Jenin and Tulkarm. Arab and Jewish forces are deadlocked at the approaches to Tel Aviv. The Arab Legion is still effectively blockading the only supply road to Jerusalem, although the delivery of essential civilian supplies by the International Red Cross will be permitted during the cessation of hostilities.

Possible new line-up in Arab states: An important new development in inter-Arab relations may be indicated by the insistence of Transjordan, Iraq, and Egypt on Arab acceptance of the Security Council's Palestine truce resolution over the objections of Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon. In the past, Egypt has backed Saudi Arabia and Syria in their opposition to the territorial ambitions of the Hashimite rulers of Transjordan and Iraq. It now appears that Egypt (possibly because of its large military stake in the Palestine fighting) is ready to cooperate with the UK-backed Hashimite states in whatever course of action is undertaken in Palestine. Although the irreconcilability of Arab and Jewish demands makes a compromise solution unlikely, it is possible that the three major Arab armies now in Palestine will acquiesce in a military stalemate. Israel would be permanently blockaded, desultory fighting would continue, but the Arabs would make no major attempt to invade the Jewish areas along the coast and in Galilee. The Egyptian, Transjordan, and Iraqi governments could pacify public opinion at home by placing the blame for inaction on UN opposition to the war and on the failure of Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon to give effective support to the Arab armies in Palestine. Provided internal security were maintained in Egypt, Transjordan, and Iraq, the UK would not be greatly disturbed by political upheavals in Syria and Lebanon or by the isolation of Saudi Arabia, because the British position in these three countries has never been

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strong. Continued UK-Hashimite-Egyptian cooperation would dangerously weaken Syria and Saudi Arabia in the Arab world and would increase the possibility of Hashimite aggression against either country or both.

The Italian colonies: The disposition of Italy's former African colonies, although not yet a critical issue, is already displaying a disturbing resemblance to the Palestine problem. In Libya, in particular, the same major factors exist: (1) an increasingly nationalistic Arab majority, backed by the Arab League, which demands independence; (2) a colonizing minority (Italian instead of Zionist) that has settled along the coast and promoted western skills and development; and (3) a great power (the UK) that would like to control the area for strategic reasons.

Public opinion in both provinces of Libya itself is for immediate independence, though neither territory would be unwilling to accept outside assistance in establishing its government. Cyrenaica desires an hereditary monarchy under Emir Said Idris, the leader of the powerful Senussi tribe, while Tripolitania wants a constitutional government along European lines. The UK, which promised the Senussi during the war that Italian rule would never be reimposed on them, feels that the best solution would be a British trusteeship over a united Libya under the rule of Said Idris. The Italians naturally wish to regain control of their former colonies. They are supported by the French, who are fearful lest the grant of independence to Libya result in mounting pressure for independence from the Arabs of the French North African colonies. The USSR, in order to curry favor with both the Italians and the French, is also urging the return of the colonies to Italy, the weakest of the Western powers. The Arab League, because of its preoccupation with the Palestine issue, has not yet taken a very active part in the discussion. However, it is continually urging independence for all the Arab lands of North Africa; and if the Palestine issue ever dies down, the Arab League will certainly support the Arabs of Libya as wholeheartedly as it is now supporting the Arabs of Palestine.

The Deputies to the Council of Foreign Ministers will attempt to resolve these complex differences before 15 September 1948. If, as is probable, they are unable to reach agreement, the issue will be referred to the General Assembly. There, the USSR is certain to encourage the divergence of opinion already existing between France and Italy on the one hand and the UK on the other. The attitude of the US, which to date favors a short UK trusteeship followed by early independence for Libya, may well be decisive in the recommendations of the General Assembly. However, the entire issue will threaten Western unity far more than even the Palestine issue has done and may further embitter the already dangerously strained relations between the Western and the Arab worlds.

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GREECE

Greek reaction to guerrilla peace feelers: The Markos "peace proposals" have left the Greeks unmoved. The press interprets the proposals variously as a trick to cool the ardor of the Greek Army, as an initial step in a so-called Soviet peace offensive, or as an acknowledgement of Communist weakness. The Greek people themselves have with uncommon unity supported the Minister of War's unofficial reiteration that the government will not consider a negotiated peace but will insist on unconditional surrender by the guerrillas as the only way of ending hostilities. It would not have been surprising if the people had been more receptive to the Markos proposals; although they are by now well acquainted with the impossibility of reaching an honest compromise with the Communists, many might have been expected to accept future political risks in exchange for immediate release from the terror and bloodshed of eight years of war. The unanimity of the public reaction may well inspire greater cooperation within the government itself when parliament reconvenes next week.

TURKEY

Government seeks to strengthen cabinet: The shakeup of the Turkish Cabinet, still headed by Premier Saka, is clearly intended to strengthen the Government's position in the National Assembly by-elections to be held in the near future. The government has been under heavy criticism, particularly for its mismanagement of economic affairs (resulting, for example, in shortages of bread and sugar and the continued high cost of living) and for governmental attempts to shield high officials accused of misconduct. The government has evidently realized that its answers to public criticism have not been persuasive enough and, although only a few seats are at stake in the forthcoming elections, has judged it prudent to remove the less popular members of the Cabinet.

IRAN

Shah may have to accept a Qavam cabinet: Former Prime Minister Qavam appears to be more of a key man than ever now that the Bakhti Government has at last fallen. The Shah may attempt to set up a new cabinet on his own, but it is unlikely that he can organize sufficient support in the Majlis for such a venture to last long. Sooner or later, therefore, he will probably have to acquiesce in a regime either headed by Qavam or supported by him.

INDIA-PAKISTAN

Kashmir situation still grave: The reported clash between Indian and Pakistan regular troops in Kashmir has failed to provoke either dominion

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into open war, but the situation remains critical. India would doubtless like to control Kashmir before the UN Kashmir Commission arrives. It is therefore probable that its forces will encounter additional elements of the Pakistan Army which have taken positions some 20 to 40 miles inside Kashmir's western boundary, along a 100-mile front, in order to bolster the Azad (Free) Kashmir forces. Thus, although neither dominion appears disposed to start a general conflict, a situation may develop in which either India or Pakistan might feel constrained to declare war.

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